Assassinations Panel Probing Allegations

New FBI-Police Link to King Killing Charged

By Jeremiah O'Leary
Washington Star Staff Writer

The House Assassinations Committee has received two new reports to investigate in connection with the murder of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

One is a letter received by Rep. Gene Snyder, D-Ky., from a former policeman who claims the FBI agents and police officers conspired to kill the civil rights leader and that he was twice offered $500,000 to kill King.

The other is a copyrighted article in the New Times magazine which purports that Ray's mysterious employer "Raoul" was really Ray's own brother, Jerry.

These allegations were made public as Chief Counsel Richard A. Sprague prepared to go to Brushy Mountain Penitentiary in Tennessee this week to interview Ray. Ray pleaded guilty to slaying King in 1968 and was sentenced to 99 years in jail.

HE HAS NEVER testified under oath about what he knows of the Memphis murder. The committee is expected to subpoena Ray to testify in Washington if it gets authority and funding past its March 31 cutoff date.

Snyder, in Louisville, would not name the former policeman who wrote the letter about the alleged FBI-police plot to kill King. But he has given the letter to the committee now headed by Chairman Louis Stokes, D-Ohio, and Sprague has acknowledged that its allegations are being investigated.

According to Snyder, he has met the former policeman "face to face" and he appears to be a "rational, logical kind of man." Snyder said he received the letter last month and also listened to a tape recording the man said he made of the alleged assassination plot.

The FBI said it had no comment because the matter is under congressional investigation.

SNYDER WOULD NOT say what police department was involved or even if it was in Kentucky. He read the letter to the Associated Press but deleted all names, saying only that the plot involved three FBI agents and "three or four policemen."

Snyder said he did not know why the former policeman came to him. He said the man asked to be put in touch with the assassinations committee.

The New Times article by David S. Lifton and Jeff Cohen also has been brought to the attention of the committee. The authors assert that Ray has subsituted the name Raoul for his brother, Jerry, in several instances including the purchase of the rifle that was allegedly used to kill King. Jerry Ray, now employed in Chicago, was at one time associated with J.B. Stoner, the racist leader of the National States Rights party.

Ray's claim, since he renounced his confession, has been that he was working on a smuggling deal with Raoul and was in Memphis the day King was killed on orders of Raoul. No one has ever been able to locate Raoul.

THE MAGAZINE quotes attorney Percy Foreman as saying Ray had acknowledged Jerry Ray was with him when Ray bought the rifle, believed to have been the murder weapon, in Birmingham, Ala. William Bradford Huie, a Ray biographer, has testified he believed Jerry Ray had advance knowledge of the assassination.

Jerry Ray has always insisted that he was working at a Chicago club for months before and after the assassination and never left there. He was questioned repeatedly by the FBI during the investigation and contends that FBI knew he worked seven nights a week.

The New Times claims that the FBI never adequately pursued Jerry Ray's whereabouts at the time of the purchase of the rifle a few days before King was killed.

The magazine says even if Raoul and Jerry Ray are the same person, it does not follow that they were co-conspirators in King's death. The article raises the possibility that both were dupes.

The FBI has said it cannot positively connect the bullet that killed King with the rifle Ray purchased because the bullet was too badly mangled for ballistics comparison. The committee intends to conduct its own ballistics tests this week.

Ray's fingerprints were on the rifle, the rifle was found near the rooming house from which the shot was fired, and Ray sticks to his present story that he did not fire the shot.